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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [JO](#)  
SUBJECT: JORDAN: PM RESIGNS, NEW GOVERNMENT TO BE FORMED

Classified By: Ambassador R. Stephen Beecroft for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (S//NF) Summary: Nader al-Dahabi resigned as Prime Minister today, and Samir Zayd al-Rifa'i, son of Upper House Speaker Zayd al-Rifa'i, is to take his place. The King privately cited corruption within the previous government and the delay in parliamentary elections as reasons for the timing of the announcement. While the end of Dahabi's government is not a surprise, initial reactions to the appointment of Rifa'i as Prime Minister have been mixed at best. This change in government has been long anticipated, but it remains to be seen whether a new Cabinet--still unconfirmed--will prove itself to be more competent in its reform efforts than its predecessor. End summary.

12. (S//NF) King Abdullah told the Ambassador that he perceived the previous government as having become "tainted by corruption" and said that was the basis for the change in government. Senior Jordanian officials also told the Ambassador that the timing of the announcement also reflects an effort to place the blame for the delay in parliamentary elections, announced on December 9, squarely on the shoulders of the Dahabi government.

#### THE NEW PRIME MINISTER

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13. (S//NF) Samir Zayd al-Rifa'i has little personal experience in government, but he comes from a family with numerous government ties and has credentials in business and finance matters. For the short term, Rifa'i probably will be seen as inexperienced and as having been appointed Prime Minister because of his relationship with the King. Rifa'i is the son of Upper House Speaker Zayd al-Rifa'i and second cousin to Nasser Judeh, who served as foreign minister in the previous government. Before being appointed Prime Minister, the younger Rifa'i was CEO at Jordan Dubai International Capital (2005-09) and served as adviser to the King during April-October 2005. Prior to his appointment as adviser, he served as Minister of the Royal Court (2003-05)--a position that no longer exists. Rifa'i also is a friend of the King and allegedly conducts business on his behalf. (Comment: The Rifa'i family has a reputation for corruption, but it is unclear if the family's reputation applies to the new Prime Minister.) Rifa'i was born in 1966. He obtained a bachelors degree from Harvard University in middle eastern studies and a masters degree in international relations from Cambridge University in the United Kingdom.

#### INITIAL REACTIONS TO NEW PM MIXED AT BEST

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14. (S//NF) Comment: Reactions from Embassy contacts have been mixed so far. While the end of the Dahabi government is largely seen positively, contacts hesitate to judge the new government until the list of newly appointed Cabinet ministers is announced. The previous government was generally seen as ineffectual, and reformist circles saw it

as incapable of drafting or implementing reforms. Once the new ministers are confirmed, responses will ultimately be based on comparisons of the Dahabi government and the Rifa'i government. End comment.  
Beecroft